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# Medical Mission Series

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## HOSPITALS IN SIAM

1. Southern Siam
2. The Laos



New Hospital, Nakawn

Woman's Board of Foreign Missions  
of the Presbyterian Church  
156 Fifth Avenue, Room 313, New York

1903

# HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES

1908

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## SOUTHERN SIAM.

BANGKOK.—Medical itineration.

LUCIUS C. BULKLEY, M. D.

PETCHABURI.—Hospital; dispensary.

E. B. McDANIELS, M. D.

RAJABURI.—Hospital; dispensary.

REV. EGON WACHTER, M. D.

NAKAWN.—Hospital; dispensary.

W. J. SWART, M. D.

PITSANULOK.—Hospital; dispensary.

CARL J. SHELLMAN, M. D.

## LAOS.

CHIENG MAI.—Hospital; dispensary.

LAMPOON (sub-station).—Dispensary.

JAMES W. MCKEAN, M. D.; CLAUDE W. MASON, M. D.

LAKAWN.—Hospital; dispensary.

C. C. HANSEN, M. D.

NAN.—Hospital; dispensary.

REV. S. C. PEOPLES, M. D.

PRÉ.—Hospital; dispensary.

CHIENG RAI.—Hospital; dispensary; twenty branch dispensaries in villages.

REV. W. A. BRIGGS, M. D.; CHARLES H. CROOKS, M. D.

Total number of patients treated (1907) 57,062.

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We are indebted to the kindness of W. A. Briggs, M. D., for much of the information contained in this leaflet.

## HOSPITALS IN SIAM



EDICAL MISSION work in Siam began in 1835 with the arrival of Dr. Daniel B. Bradley, a missionary of the American Board. Dr. Bradley was a man of remarkable skill and ability, and remained in Siam after his Board's work there was given up, devoting himself to the welfare of the Siamese until his death in 1873. Rev. S. R. House, M. D., the first physician sent by the Presbyterian Church, arrived in 1847.

During the first critical years of the Mission, the medical work was the chief means of allaying the natural prejudice felt against the foreigners and gaining toleration from the old king. Since the accession of King Chulalongkorn in 1868, American missionary physicians have been the trusted advisers of the government in its efforts to introduce scientific medical practice. With the gradual increase of intelligence the new generation has come to recognize to some extent the efficiency of modern methods and especially the benefits of surgical skill. The king has established in Bangkok army and navy hospitals, two hospitals for citizens, an insane asylum and a Royal School of Medicine. All these, with one or two exceptions, are in charge of medical missionaries, or of those who have at some time been connected with the missionary work. The crown prince, who was educated in England, has asked several missionary physicians to write theses on hygiene and the most prevalent diseases to serve as a basis for sanitary measures to be brought before the government. But

the spread of western ideas is confined as yet to a very narrow circle, and the masses of the people, both in city and country, are content to live and die in the unsanitary traditions of their forefathers.

We have no organized medical work in **Bangkok**. Rev. Eugene P. Dunlap, D. D., though not a professional physician, has relieved much suffering in his itinerating trips by land and sea along the shores of the Gulf of Siam and through the peninsular provinces. In such tours recently made by Dr Dunlap and Lucius C. Bulkley, M. D., over one thousand patients were treated and many operations performed, besides thousands of vaccinations. Dr. Bulkley says:

The high commissioner of Pooket, grateful for his own recovery from serious illness, offered to build hospitals at two places if missionaries could be sent. "I want a missionary doctor," he said, "because I know how much deeper interest he will take in the sick than an ordinary doctor. Come start hospitals and schools and I will see that money is secured to help support them, and I will also aid you in going about to preach to the people." His excellency has since purchased land and drawn up plans for the first hospital at Tap Tiang, an important market town.

At Panga, for a cripple who had been bitten by a crocodile, we made a pair of crutches, the first ever seen in that region. What a change it made in his life! From lying helpless on his back for seven years he was now an active and independent member of the community—even his name was changed from "Dog" to "Happy." He was baptized, with his mother, on Dr. Dunlap's arrival.

Each of the four provincial mission stations in Siam, Petchaburi, Rajaburi, Pitsanuloke and Nakawn, has now a good hospital and dispensary, with a resident physician. In all these places land was given by the king or rented at a nominal price, and generous gifts made for the buildings. The women's ward at Petchaburi was given by the queen. These stations are all centers for wide itinerating work. Rajaburi and Petchaburi are now connected with Bangkok by rail, which makes it easier to obtain supplies and saves much time in travel.

The beautiful hospital at **Pitsanuloke**, 255 miles north of Bangkok, is the only one in that region. It was given by the high commissioner as a memorial to his mother, and

built and equipped with modern apparatus by Dr. Toy's energetic efforts. Though only three years old, this hospital of fourteen beds is already too small. The physician in charge rejoices in an excellent Siamese assistant, thoroughly sympathetic and useful. On a recent tour over one thousand six hundred children were vaccinated. The governor of the province was so pleased with this service that he offered to pay all expenses of the trip.

**Nakawn**, five hundred miles south of Bangkok, occupies a field of its own as the center of influence in its province. In 1883 an invalid gentleman of Nakawn started in a sailboat with his wife to consult the "foreign doctor" at Bangkok. The little boat was driven by the wind into the harbor of Petchaburi. "Why go to Bangkok?" said the people. "Here at Petchaburi is a foreign doctor who can almost make the dead to live!" The strangers made their way to the hospital; the man was cured of his illness and both he and his wife became Christians before returning home. Through their influence missionaries were sent to Nakawn and a church organized in 1895. The medical work has always been important, and in 1907 a beautiful hospital was completed and opened through Dr. Swart's exertions. The entire cost was twenty-four thousand ticals (\$8,000 gold), of which three fourths was given in Siam.

All these hospitals are self-supporting, except for the salaries of the physicians in charge.

The prevalent diseases in Siam are cholera, dysentery and malarial fevers—all transmitted by infected water or abundant insect life. In Bangkok, while the climate is not more unwholesome than that of other tropical cities, the question of water is a very serious one. There is practically no rain for six months of the year; there are no wells or springs; the only natural supply comes from the filthy river and canals, which serve as bath tubs, wash tubs and sewers for the city. The masses drink the river water, with the natural

results. The only alternative is that adopted by most of the well-to-do people—to gather and store the rain water that falls in the wet season. This has to be done with the greatest care and the supply kept in covered earthen jars or sometimes in great iron tanks, which are carefully locked for fear of robbers. The stored water must be further purified by boiling or filtering before it is safe for drinking. A small family requires a store of about eight hundred gallons. One may imagine the expense and vigilance needed to provide an adequate six months' supply for a large school or hospital.

The natives have a great dread of cholera, which they call "the hurricane," from its sudden coming and swift fatality, and fear to mention its name. A great spirit, they say, sits with his feet in the fire and needs many servants to bring him water. All those whose bodies are not burned are forced to serve him. Cremation is the general custom in Siam, but is forbidden in the case of cholera victims until after some months. Thus the spirit has all those that die of this disorder. After a time many of these bodies will be taken up and burned, and their spirits thus delivered from their hard master. When his retinue becomes too small, he sends another epidemic of cholera to keep up the number.

In times of epidemic a tall bamboo pole stands in front of each house, from which float gay-colored flags of odd shapes. When the first cholera patient dies in Bangkok his hands are examined and the shapes formed by the intersecting lines on the palms are carefully traced. From these the Buddhist priests make these flags, which the people buy as charms. Upon one of the flags the names of the household are written, and at night a lantern is hung from each pole so that the evil spirit may see the names and pass by the house.

The chief dependence of the native practitioners for all ailments is upon incantations and charms. They know nothing of surgery, but use various preparations of medicinal herbs and roots, and curious medieval compounds, of which the following popular cure for all kinds of fever may serve as an example: Take equal parts of elephant's tusk, tiger's teeth, crocodile's teeth and bear's teeth; equal parts of buffalo horn, rhinoceros horn, stag's horn and sandalwood; equal parts of the bones of a vulture, a crow and a goose. All these to be pulverized and mixed on a stone with pure water, one half the resulting paste swallowed at one dose, the other half rubbed on the outside of the body.

Dried rhinoceros skin is sold in the markets in hard, black slabs about a foot square, at one dollar a pound. A tea made from the parings is supposed to be useful in cases of malaria. For wounds, one remedy is a young mouse burnt to a cinder and tightly bound on.

There is crying necessity everywhere for sanitary and medical reforms. It is said that seventy-five per cent of the children born die in childhood from disease or lack of care,

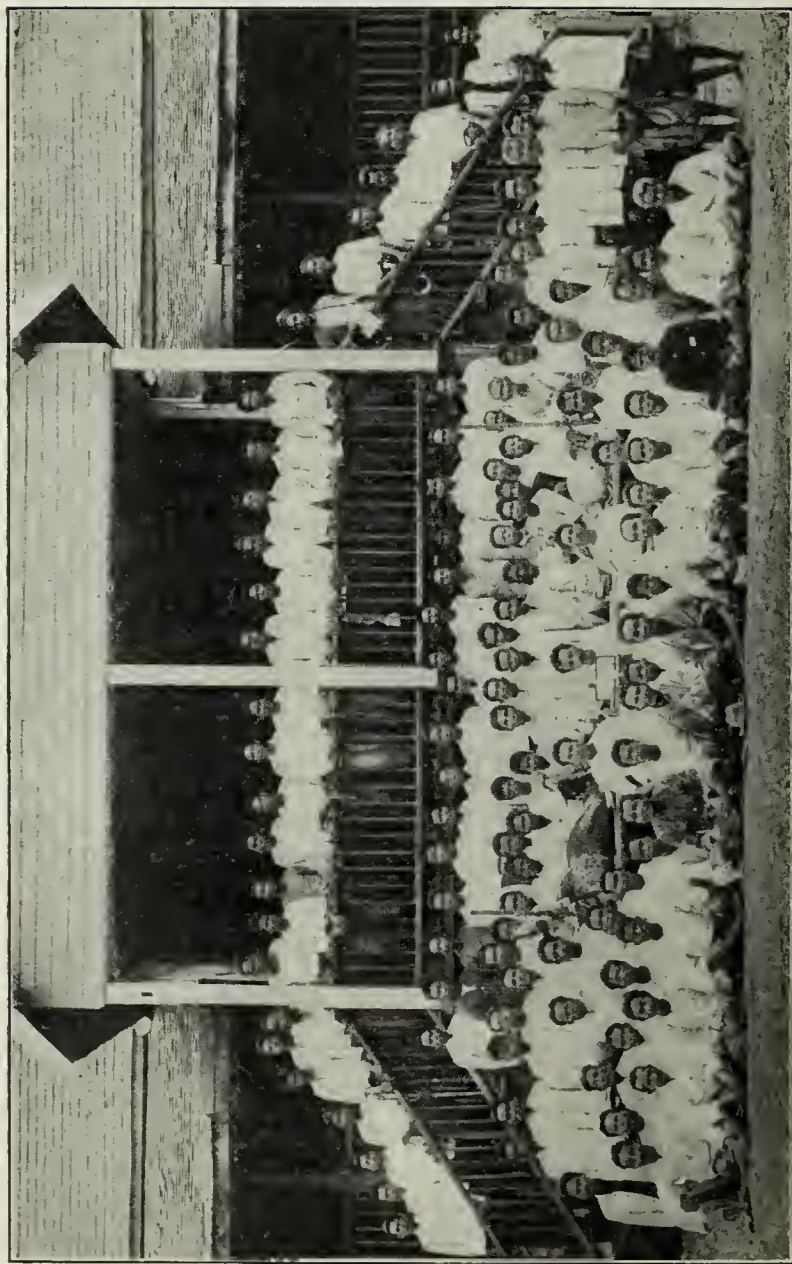


and in some districts the population is actually decreasing. Smallpox destroys many thousands every year. Vaccination was introduced by Dr. Bradley, who had to hire men to undergo it. The government now offers it free to all, but it is yet far from general.

The Laos people, occupying the northern provinces of Siam, are largely spirit-worshippers and ascribe all diseases to the agency of demons. The pioneer missionaries, coming in 1867, brought with them the blessings of healing as well as teaching. Dr. McGilvary, though without a physician's title, did a physician's work from the beginning. He introduced the use of quinine for the prevalent malarial fevers, even hiring people at first to take it and prove its value. To-day quinine is in general use, and has saved many lives. Dr. McGilvary also introduced vaccination, until then unheard of. Dr. M. A. Cheek, Dr. Vrooman and Dr. Peoples were the earliest physicians commissioned. Others have followed them and through their ministrations prejudice has been broken down and a hearing gained for the gospel.

Five stations—Chieng Mai, Lakawn, Nan, Chieng Rai, and Pré—now have hospitals and dispensaries, all self-supporting. At Lampoon a dispensary is maintained, though there is no resident physician. Thirty-five thousand patients are treated annually by these hospitals. Problems in this region are intensified by the great distance from the base of supplies. When deficiencies can only be made up by a journey of three weeks down the river and six weeks back, it behooves the doctor to take long looks ahead.

**Chieng Mai**, the capital of the province, has an excellent hospital in a spacious compound, with a separate pavilion for foreigners. One unique feature here is a vaccine laboratory, established by Dr. McKean on account of the impossibility of obtaining satisfactory virus. The lymph is supplied to



VACCINATING STAFF, CHIANG MAI HOSPITAL

These Christian men have vaccinated more than ten thousand persons and have carried the good news into many villages never yet reached by a missionary.



the government employés as well as to the staff of the hospital. A corps of 140 Christian men are employed to travel through the province vaccinating the people and preaching the gospel. They carry with them quinine and simple remedies, and also distribute gospels and tracts. Ten thousand persons were recently vaccinated in six months. A small charge is made, of which the operators get half, which supplies their expenses; the rest goes to the hospital. These men are required to spend three days each month at the hospital for instruction, and some of them become quite skillful. Even with this partial training they are infinitely superior to the native spirit doctors.

Dr. McKean says:

"Among many reasons for gratitude to God, I must not fail to mention our three long-trying and faithful hospital assistants. Especially should we mention our head nurse, Dr. Kao, who is unwearied in service to the poor and distressed."

For many years past it has been felt that there was urgent need for some organized work for lepers, of whom there are many in Siam. Buddhism has done nothing for them and never will. According to Buddhist belief, lepers are suffering for sins committed in some previous existence, and the decrees of fate must not be thwarted. As the loss of parts of the hands and feet makes any kind of work impossible, begging is the leper's only resource. Hence these unfortunate creatures, who are a menace to the community, wander about in all public places, begging for food to keep life in their poor deformed bodies.

Dr. McKean says:

"Ten years ago we began to represent the case to the Bangkok government and have often asked for land on which to erect a refuge. Now his excellency the governor of Chiang Mai has kindly given us for the purpose half of an island in the river near Chiang Mai, and his gift has been ratified by royal authority. The tract of land is ideal in every way. It comprises 160 acres, most of it suitable for the culture of rice, which is the chief food here. It has lain fallow for years because it was the forage ground for the governor's pet elephant, which was so vicious that no one dared to live near his haunts. When the elephant died we begged earnestly for the ground

and the governor turned it over to us. At the upper end stands a spreading banyan tree, under whose branches Dr. and Mrs. McGilvary moored their boats and spent their first Sunday when they came as pioneers to Chieng Mai, forty-one years ago.

"We fervently hope and believe that the 'governor's gift marks the beginning of the end of leprosy in Siam. Careful and loving treatment of those now afflicted, a practical demonstration of the benefits of segregation, and the growth of education and Christian sentiment will, we trust, bring about compulsory segregation, which in the course of time will stamp out the disease in Siam as it did in Europe centuries ago. In the meantime the Christian church should care for the outcasts and also give them the gospel. . . . Our present crying need is for money to erect suitable buildings where we may house and feed our outcast friends—men and women for whom Christ died, and for whom he seems to have felt an especial compassion."

At **Lakawn** (1885) is the Van Santvoord Memorial Hospital, to which a new ward for women and children was added in 1906. Not a few of the church members were brought to Christ in the hospital. Among these was a young man of intellect and fine character, who is now one of the best teachers in the boys' school. All the assistants in both hospital and dispensary are Christians, so that a Christian influence pervades the place.

Four days' journey southeast of Lakawn is the station of **Pré** (1894) in a fertile and beautiful valley. Here the hospital work has been done in temporary structures of bamboo, without any adequate equipment. There is just now no resident physician.

**Nan** (1895) is a beautiful walled city embowered in trees, eight days' journey northeast of Lakawn. The mission property is situated between the city wall and the Nan River. A new dispensary recently erected is admirably adapted to its purpose. There are three large, airy rooms, with clinic and storerooms, and a wide veranda. Dr. Peoples has done much for the Laos people in his twenty-five years of devoted service, amid all the anxieties and discouragements of pioneer medical work with very imperfect appliances. It is hoped that the new dispensary may be followed some day by a hospital of sufficient capacity and equipment for the growing needs.

**Chieng Rai** (1897), our most isolated station among the Laos, is nine days by jungle trail northeast of Chieng Mai. The American mail is nearly three months old when it reaches the lonely mission there. The city lies on the main route of trade, drawing custom from Indo-China (French), the South Shan States (English), and Southern China. Dr. C. A. Denman and his successor, Dr. W. A. Briggs, have built up an important medical work at Chieng Rai under great difficulties. Twenty branch dispensaries are maintained in the country districts, and the civil and police departments of the local government draw their supplies through our dispensary.

The great need for new buildings will be relieved on the return of Dr. Briggs from his furlough, by the erection of a memorial hospital, for the building and equipment of which \$10,000 gold has been given. This generous provision will relieve the physician of the anxious struggle to care for the suffering with no adequate means.

The remarkable progress of Siam in civilization during the last fifty years is second only to that of Japan. The responsibilities laid upon those who have stimulated and guided this progress are well stated in the weighty words of the Hon. Hamilton King, United States Minister to Siam, in an address recently delivered at Bangkok:

"The missionaries came to Siam to help her people. They found multitudes dying of disease; they fought cholera with cleanliness, fevers with quinine, smallpox with vaccination. . . . Now Siam has changed. She has taken long steps forward in fifty years. Things are no longer in their beginnings. From the introduction of quinine and vaccination have developed questions of national sanitation and organized medical work. Are you missionaries who planted for this growth ready to help develop the crop?"

"Siam asks you to do your part in shaping the medical work of the nation; to stamp it with the *best* known to Christian medical science. Anything less than the best will not avail. Medical men are needed who shall come from the *best* schools and conduct the *best* hospitals in the *best* way."

**Price, 3 cents; 30 cents a dozen.**

